

Delaware Nutrient Management  
Program  
  
DELAWARE CONSERVATION  
PRACTICE STANDARD  
  
SOIL TESTING PROCEDURES  
  
(Reported by No.)

**DEFINITION**

Procedures to analyze soils and test their nutrient content.

**PURPOSES**

This practice may be applied for one or more of the following purposes:

1. Maintain proper nutrient levels in soil.
2. Avoid adding excess nutrients.
3. Increase crop production efficiency.
4. Maintain water quality.
5. Be cost effective with fertilizer.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE  
APPLIES**

This practice applies where:

1. Soils may have different nutrient levels in various parts of fields.
2. Farmers want to ensure they are adding the right amount of fertilizer to crops.
3. Troubleshooting: Identification of nutrient excess or deficiency affecting plant growth.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

It is critical that soil samples are collected so as to accurately represent the nutrient status of the soil. A soil sample should be collected for each 20 acres, and on a smaller areas that seem different.

**CRITERIA**

**Proficiency Testing.** Labs must apply to be enrolled as participants of the Proficiency Assessment program (PAP) each year. This ensures that the labs remain qualified for the program and proficient in their testing.

**REFERENCES**

A description of sample collection procedures can be viewed at:  
[http://ag.udel.edu/other\\_websites/DSTP/forms/how%20to%20sample%20%20-%20commercial.pdf](http://ag.udel.edu/other_websites/DSTP/forms/how%20to%20sample%20%20-%20commercial.pdf)

A description of University of Delaware soil testing procedures can be viewed at:  
[http://ag.udel.edu/other\\_websites/DSTP/forms/Croprecs/soiltestnotes/stnote01.pdf](http://ag.udel.edu/other_websites/DSTP/forms/Croprecs/soiltestnotes/stnote01.pdf)